

Illinois Accessibility Task Force

May 17, 2010 - 1:30 p.m. – Capitol Building, Room 409

MEETING MINUTES

Task Force Members in Attendance

Senator Pamela Althoff, Chairperson (representing the Minority Leader of the Senate)

Rep. Tim Schmitz (via teleconference)(representing the IL House of Representatives)

Debbie Davis (representing the Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities)

Douglas Gamble (representing the IL Capital Development Board)

Robert Sondgeroth (via teleconference)(representing the IL Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools)

Vickie Simpson (representing the Illinois Attorney General)

Task Force Members not in Attendance

Rep. Keith Farnham (representing the Speaker of the IL House of Representatives)

Senator Michael Noland (representing the Senate President)

John Ryan (representing the IL Association of School Boards has resigned effective May 10, 2010. The Task Force is anticipating a new member to be appointed in the near future.)

Guests in Attendance

Lisa Mattingly, CDB

Nicki Patterson, CDB

Mike Prombo, CUSD 300

Susan Weitekamp, ISBE

Shirley Anderson, AIA Illinois & ICC

Windy Gerlach, CDB

Nik Moushon, CDB

Senator Althoff called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

Introductions were made by the Task Force.

Senator Althoff asked Mr. Gamble to begin with discussion of Federal Standards and the Illinois Accessibility Code as both relate to press boxes. He began with stating that possibly the 2004 Federal ADA will be signed into law in July of 2010. He stated the 1990 ADA did not address press boxes. The 2004 ADA states press boxes which are less than 500 square feet are not required to be accessible. The 1997 Illinois Accessibility Code does not speak of press boxes specifically. The Code specifically says privately owned-public facilities are exempt. Schools are publicly owned-public facilities which are not exempted. Mr. Gamble stated an Act was passed and signed by the Governor that exempted all press boxes that had been built up until the time that he signed the legislation which was in August of 2009. The Act also called for a committee to be formed to discuss future press boxes as well as any other issues that may be relevant to school districts.

Senator Althoff asked if a State can have less stringent requirements than the Federal ADA. Ms. Simpson stated that a State can have more stringent requirements than the Federal ADA, however the Federal ADA's guidelines are the minimum acceptable requirements. Ms. Simpson also stated that she would like to see the requirements stay at least as stringent as they are now, she would not want the Task Force to lessen requirements, even if Illinois is more stringent than the Federal ADA.

Senator Althoff asked if there were any comments from the attendees. Mike Prombo stated there is a concern from schools that with the new Act that an elevator would be required for all two-story press boxes. He said most press boxes are less than 500 square feet. Ms. Simpson said that she would want to ensure that all people of Illinois have access to press boxes. She went on to state that she has been involved in cases that vertical access has been via a vertical lift, not always an elevator.

Ms. Simpson also stated that many calls come into Mr. Gamble's office for interpretations of areas of the code which are not clear and he would state what the intent of the code is. She said that her office is complaint driven, so if the Attorney General's office would receive a complaint in regards to press boxes not being accessible, her office would investigate it. She stated that Mr. Gamble has been interpreting the code to require vertical access to press boxes.

Senator Althoff also agreed that the State of Illinois would want to give the opportunity to all to have access to press boxes. She also questioned how to get information out to the people of Illinois to educate those who are designing buildings, etc. Mr. Gamble stated that CDB does offer several seminars each year to try to reach out to explain the Illinois Accessibility Code.

Ms. Simpson also agreed the Attorney General's office could offer seminars. She stated that it is required of architects and engineers to stay up to date on requirements as part of their continuing education. They are responsible to ensure the building or what is being built or remodeled is in compliance with all applicable codes.

Mr. Prombo stated he felt that the bleacher companies need to know the requirements. In his experience the bleacher companies did not know of accessible requirements. He stated that his schools do make every effort to accommodate persons with disabilities.

Ms. Davis stated that she agrees with Ms. Simpson and would like to see Illinois requirements go forward and not backward.

Mr. Sondgeroth stated they will enforce whatever code requirements that are decided upon. He is concerned that it may be confusing to people that Illinois will have one code and the Federal ADA will have another code. Mr. Gamble stated that Illinois does not have a state building code and that is what the State of Illinois will have issues with. Mr. Gamble also stated that the responsibility lies with the architect if they are designing a school in Illinois. Mr. Sondgeroth agreed and stated he would like to see a more model code, but understands this probably will not happen.

Senator Althoff noted that we, as a State, should remind people that we are a leader with our accessibility requirements and we will have a stringent code. We should be proud of what our position is in regards to accessibility.

Senator Althoff asked Ms. Simpson and Ms. Davis if they felt we should look at being more stringent than the Federal ADA. Ms. Simpson stated that what Illinois does in regards to the Federal ADA requirements should be open for discussion. She would like to see what the people of Illinois have to say and would welcome feedback from all those interested. She also stated that from her perspective she is open to the idea of exploring all means of vertical access.

Mr. Gamble stated the next item the Task Force should do is look at alternatives for accessibility to press boxes. He also believes the Illinois Accessibility Code (IAC) needs to be looked at in relation to school property. Mr. Gamble recommended that the Task Force review pages 1-40 of the IAC, as they relate to school property, and be prepared to discuss and make any recommendations at the next meeting.

Senator Althoff agreed and asked the Task Force to review that area of the IAC.

Senator Althoff and the Task Force discussed dates for the next meeting. It was decided the next Task Force meeting will be on June 30th at 1:30 p.m. in Chicago with video conferencing available in Springfield. The meeting rooms will be sent out to everyone once they have been identified.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.